

The existence of the aperture was noticed by the parents of this lad a few weeks after his birth, and in the interval of four years between the separate observations made by Dr. Thomson, no material change in its appearance had taken place.

The subject of Dr. Gairdner's observation was a man of twenty-six years of age, in whom the external aperture occupied the place which, according to Aschersohn's results, appears to be its most common seat, viz., the space between the sternal and the clavicular attachments of the sterno-mastoid muscle, and about half an inch above the clavicle. In most other respects, the appearances were the same as in the case previously noticed. The probe had not been passed farther than an inch and a half in an upward direction. With a view to the eradication of this malformation, Dr. Gairdner, upon the 25th of May last, laid open the sinus by dividing the skin, platysma, and fascia in front of it, and has since adopted the usual measures for healing the opening from the bottom. The wound was not entirely closed at the time when the case was communicated to the Society; but it was so much so, as to lead to the confident hope of the operation being ultimately attended with complete success.

In neither of the preceding cases, did hereditary tendency to the occurrence of the imperfection appear; for none of the relations had been known to be similarly affected.

Dr. Duncan's case, observed some years ago, was in some respects similar to the preceding. It appeared chiefly interesting, as being the only case hitherto observed, in which, when the fissure was confined to one side of the neck, it had its seat on the left side. In three of Aschersohn's cases, both sides of the neck were affected; in the remaining eight, as in the two other cases described in the present communication, the fissure was situated on the right side; but in Dr. Duncan's case, as before stated, it was on the left.

The author made this communication to the Society in the hope that additional information might be obtained with regard to the peculiar lateral cervical sinuses described, by the collection of cases observed by other members of the Society whose attention had been thus directed to an imperfection which might otherwise have passed unnoticed by them.—*Lond. & Edinb. Monthly Journ. of Med. Sci.*, Aug., 1845.

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5. *Menstruation in an infant, commencing a few days after birth.*—Mr. WHITMORE relates (*Northern Journal of Medicine*, July, 1845), the case of a female child who from a few days after birth had her catamenia regularly at periods of three weeks and two or three days, until her death at the age of four years and some months. At this last period the development of her body was very striking—equaling that of a girl ten or eleven years of age. The mammae were unusually large, the mons veneris collapsed, but well covered with hair, the labia pudendi sparingly so, though these organs themselves were of unusual size for a child. The development of the pelvis, and of all the deep-seated genitals was very considerable; and the lower limbs were proportionately large.

She was of a fair complexion; and her hair, which was of a dark-brown colour, was very plentiful. In the absence of her periodical ailments, she would enter into all the amusements of young persons of her own age; but when she was indisposed, she was exceedingly reserved, and would withdraw from all her playful occupations. When interrogated by familiar acquaintances as to her reason for absenting herself on these occasions from the amusements of other children, she would answer that she was indisposed; but when the same question was proposed to her by those with whom she was not intimate, she would merely blush, without making any reply. There were other young females in the same family, but in them the function referred to manifested no irregularity.

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6. *Functions of the Pancreas.*—MM. BOUCHARDAT and SANDRAS, following out their researches on the chemical phenomena of digestion, have recently ascertained that the pancreatic juice possesses the same properties as the saliva. This liquid, taken from the pancreas of strong farm-yard fowls, was transparent and viscous, presenting a slightly alkaline reaction. Mixed with amidon jelly, it liquefied it and transformed it into dextrine and glucose. By adding alcohol, it formed a white deposit, which also acted on the jelly of fecula in the same manner as dia-

stasis. A temperature of 100, (centig.) or the addition of various substances, such as tannin, the mineral acids, or the metallic salts, destroyed its properties. The pancreas itself, extracted from animals, and carefully separated from the different vessels which pass through it, and from the blood by which it may be soiled, possesses in a high degree the property of giving rise to the transformation of fecula. A few fragments of the gland, mixed with starch, tepid, and very consistent, convert it, after a few minutes, into a liquid free from viscosity. Pounded and mixed with water, they give a fluid, from which it is possible to separate, with the assistance of alcohol, a flaky precipitate, endowed with the power of dissolving fecula. Other organs, such as the liver, treated in the same manner, do not give the same results. We may therefore conclude, from these facts, that the principal function of the pancreas is to secrete a liquid able to dissolve feculaceous substances, to allow of their absorption in the intestine by the smaller ramifications of the vena porta, and, consequently, to admit of their utilization by the economy. —*Lancet*, June 21, 1845.

7. *Theory of Menstruation and Corpora Lutea.* By Dr. CHARLES RITCHIE.—At a meeting of the *Medico-Chirurgical Society of Glasgow*, held on the 8th of July, Dr. Ritchie read a paper on the Theory of Menstruation and Corpora Lutea. It will be in the remembrance of our readers, that in a series of papers on the Physiology of the Human Ovary, published last year, (*London Medical Gazette*, 1843-4, and *MONTHLY JOURNAL* for July and October, 1844,) this gentleman set forth a copious proof, in his opinion, entirely subversive of the recent hypothesis of the vesicular origin of menstruation, and corrective, also, of the views previously entertained of the precise nature of corpora lutea. In the present essay, which forms part of a succession of papers now in the course of publication, as a second series on the same subject, the writer, without attempting to explain the mechanism of the fact, but assuming it to be—in the present state of our knowledge—an ultimate one, adopts the idea, that the elimination of ova and menstruation are correlative, and, in many respects, independent effects of the ordinary vital action of the ovaries as glands, and that they are as strictly, both of them, the proper and specific functional phenomena of these organs, as the secretion of mucus, and of gastric juice, and the chymification of the food, are of the stomach; the one, the extrusion of ova, being limited to no special period of life, but taking place, under certain modifications, in all; the other being the result of a periodical exaltation of the organic power of the ovaries in the healthy non-gravid and non-lactating adult women alone; which, from its extension to the nervous, vascular, and absorbing tissues of these glands, occasions the maturation and discharge of their vesicles, and from its further extension to the uterus and vagina, gives rise to the formation of deciduous vessels, and to the menses.

In reference to corpora lutea, again, it will be recollected, that Dr. Ritchie, in the paper to which we have alluded, having disposed of the yellow and black blood cysts so often found in the ovaries, limits organized corpora lutea to two species, the white (*corpora albida*), and cerebriform bodies (*corpora cephaloidea*), the former having its soft and dense, and the latter its intra and extra-mural varieties, and both of the latter becoming transformed during utero-gestation into fibrous rose-coloured structures, which he terms *corpora rubra*. In the essay now read, while he repudiated the notion that the excretion of mature ova from the ovaries is the efficient cause of menstruation, he was of opinion that the vascular orgasm of the sexual organs, in which the menstrual condition and the corresponding state in quadrupeds consists, is the true source of corpora lutea; and, holding this view, he suggested that corpora menstrualia, or corpora periodica, were more appropriate generic terms for these bodies than that in common use, while their modifications or varieties might be very conveniently designated according to their specific physical characters, such as corpora albida, &c., on the principles adopted in his former paper. He divided corpora menstrualia into primitive, secondary, and tertiary. The two species already referred to,—that constituted by the opaque and thickened membranes of the Graafian vesicle, the result of effusion into their cellulated structure, or the bodies he has called corpora albida; and that in which the effusion is larger in quantity, granular, supplied with vessels, and situated in a kind of crypts between the two layers of the follicle, the corpora cephaloidea,—